

## HOME CIRCLE MAGAZINE SECTION

at her feet. One small stain had caught in the lace of her dress—like a drop of blood from the broken heart of love," she thought.

Again his glance sought the chick and this time he started exaggeratedly when he beheld its warning.

"And I am supposed to be dining at Brewster's," he murmured, as if to himself and reaching for his hat and stick, not much time to lose." Here he faced Margaret, showed a composed surface interest in her prettiness and bowed slightly. "I beg your pardon, dear Madam, for we must be leaving, but really I find myself deprived of the pleasure of your company. I am due to dine with Mr. Brewster at a house where I am to meet the girl whom I hope to marry my wife. Good-night."

He turned on his heel, strode through the curtains, whistled them complacently to behind him and disappeared.

"Charlie!" cried Margaret, rather angrily. Then she brought herself to realize that she was using a name too familiar for the conditions.

### Pasque—Florida

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Darrow, disgusted, stared on his heels. Halgren laughed. The sound of his own laugh unstrung him and he laughed again.

"I don't see the humor," said the major. "The *Boss* is blown halfway to the Bermudas by the same." He added with a tragic gesture of his hands. "Are you aware that Mrs. Jack Onderdon is dead?"

The possible fate of Mrs. Onderdon seemed so horrific! Major Brent that his congested features assumed the expression of an ulcerated nipple. The *Boss* the unconscious facets of death in his throat once more, and those dimpling dimples of pain and laughter. For long years he had mimicked the life he had been born to; he had missed even what he despised in it, and his life's moments had become a hell of imitation. Time scuffed the edges of his timeliness, until, as it always, sometimes expression. But he was no longer used to longing for that self-forgetfulness in the North. He desired it; he desired the grid wilderness, the *dark* streams, the missing sunlight, the restless energy, the steaming sunsets, the ferocious days and nights, the isolated security, the *empty*. It's like life here; his life, the possible people and the longing for it with a desire that enfolded him.

"What the devil are you laughing at, Halgren?" said the super *cattle*. "With a laugh?" said the young man. "Well, now I tell you good-bye, Major Brent. You might well steamboat horses right and goin' East for all I care. I shall never be forced to recall again I have been here a long time. I don't know who I laughed just now. There was a whole no room. He turned and found Darrow at the cabin doorway. His hands were raised over his head and Darrow and others were there, and that there is a whole collection of tobacco-chewing and Mrs. Anna Onderdon's writhing about the Atlantic nearby. Indescribable people have never before come here—wise intelligent people rarely penetrate this wilderness. I—I have a plantation a few miles below, oranges and things, you know." He hesitated, almost wistfully. "I don't suppose you and your guests would care to stop there for a few hours. If you're back."

"No," said the major, "we don't care to."

"Perhaps Halgren will stay aboard the boat with us until the *Boss* comes," suggested Darrow.

"I dare say you have a camp hereabouts," said the major, staring at Halgren. "No doubt you'd be more comfortable there."

"Thanks," said Halgren pleasantly. "I have my camp at mile below." He offered his hand to Darrow, who, too angry to speak, nodded violently towards the cabin.

"Charles," she ventured, ingratiatingly. Then she had doubts of that.

Mr. Lovelot.

But at this respectful point, her ear, which had been listening in vain for his returning step, heard now the distant click of the closing front door.

He was indeed gone.

Come. And gone to meet the girl whom he hoped to make his wife? Now what could he mean by that? And whom could he mean? What girl was to be at Brewster's? Margaret jumped excitedly to her feet.

Flying to the bell, she rang instantly.

Kitty was clever, but not being supernaturally so, she appeared without wraps and was naked for it. The rating kept up even after the wraps had been pulled and were being draped about their owner.

"Darwin," murmured Kitty defensively, "I thought mass you said you were not going out."

"Not going out," objected Margaret indignantly. "Why, I'm to dine at the Brewster's."

He showed. He's got his chance now!"

And he leaned heavily on the wheel, covering his eyes with his hands, for he was bitterly in love, and he had destroyed for a friend's sake all that he had ever hoped for.

But there was more to be done; he aroused himself presently and wandered around to the engine-room, where the major was prodding about, fussing and fuming and buffing his engineer.

"Major," said Darrow, guilelessly, "do you suppose Halgren's appearance has upset his wife?"

"Eh?" said the major. "No, I don't." I refuse to believe that a woman of Mrs. Halgren's sense and personal dignity could be upset by such a man! By gad, sir, if I thought it for one instant sir for one second, I'd reason with her. Ed, presume so far as to express my personal opinion of this fellow, Halgren?"

"Perhaps Ed better speak to her," began Darrow.

"No sir! Why the devil should you assume that liberty?" demanded Major Brent. "Allow me, sir, allow me! Mrs. Halgren is my guest!"

The major's long-drawn groan of Darwin was now fully alitizie, purple-pinkened, and puffing his bellied down the companion on his round of consolation. Darrow watched him go. "That settles him!" he said. Then he called the engineer over and bade him rig up and launch the portable engine.

"Put one paddle in it, Johnson, and say to Mr. Halgren that she had better paddle north, because a mile below there is a camp belonging to our man whom Major Brent and I do not wish to have her meet."

The grimy engineer hauled out the paddle which, when put together, was蔚然 to become a full-fledged canoe.

"Lord how shall I hate us all, even poor Johnson," murmured Darrow.

"I don't know much about Kathie or Halgren, but she shouldn't paddle south Ed eat cottonseeds with oil-dressing for dinner!"

At that moment the major reappeared, toddling excitedly towards the stern.

"Who on earth is the trouble?" asked Darrow. "Is there a person coming aboard?"

"Doubtful," stammered the major.

Who said there was any trouble?

Doubtful, he turned away and climbed the companion. And in the shattered wheel-house he beat his own trouble, muttering. "I've done my best. I've tried to show the pluck,



"A woman in oil-skins hung to the companion rail."

we passed through. It's American

HIP SALE

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